

REMARKS

This Amendment, submitted in response to the Office Action dated September 29, 2005, is believed to be fully responsive to each point of rejection raised therein. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration on the merits is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-20 are pending in the present application. Claims 7-10, 14-16 and 20 have been withdrawn pursuant to a restriction requirement.

I. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 2, 3, 5 and 6 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In particular, the Examiner has interpreted “between one minute” in claim 2 and “between 30 seconds” in claim 3 to read as “within one minute” and “within 30 seconds,” respectively. Applicant has amended claims 2 and 3 as indicated above. Consequently, Applicant respectfully requests that the § 112, second paragraph rejection of claims 2, 3, 5 and 6 be withdrawn.

II. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-6, 11-13 and 17-19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shigemitsu et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,840,874) in view of Takahasi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,569,573), Urano et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,153,356) or Akiyama et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,637,334).

Claim 1 recites

"An image forming method on a planographic printing plate precursor including a support having disposed thereon an **image recording layer** that contains polymerizable compound-encapsulating microcapsules, a polymerization initiator, and a light-to-heat conversing agent, comprising the steps of:

irradiating the planographic printing plate precursor **with an infrared beam to form an image in the recording layer** of the planographic printing plate precursor; and

prior to irradiating an area with the infrared beam, carrying out pre-heating at a pre-heat region including the irradiation area in the image recording layer to locally bring to a pre-heat temperature,

wherein the **pre-heating step has been completed before the infrared beam irradiation is started.**"

The Examiner asserts that Shigemitsu discloses a method of forming a resist pattern on a substrate including coating a layer of resist on a substrate, pre-baking the resist, and rapidly cooling the coated substrate at a time which appears to fall within the instant claim limitations, and is then irradiated.

However, Shigemitsu is directed to forming a resist pattern on a substrate such as a mask substrate for use in manufacturing semiconductor devices or a semiconductor substrate. Shigemitsu discloses coating a resist on a substrate by spin coating, baking the resist at a temperature in its Tg region or higher, and exposing the resist to electromagnetic waves or corpuscular rays and annealing the resist at a temperature within the Tg region to lower the solubility rate. See col. 4, lines 32-47. Shigemitsu does not teach or suggest an image forming

method, disposing an image recording layer on a support of a planographic printing plate, irradiating the planographic printing plate with an infrared beam to form an image in the recording layer, prior to irradiating an area with the infrared beam, carrying out pre-heating at a pre-heat region including the irradiation area in the image recording layer to locally bring to a pre-heat temperature, and that a pre-heating step has been completed before the infrared beam irradiation is started, as recited in claim 1.

The Examiner then asserts that Shigemitsu does not disclose the type of resist, and cites Takahashi, Urano or Akiyama to cure the deficiency. However, neither Takahashi, Urano or Akiyama cure the deficiencies of Shigemitsu. Moreover, the combination of Takahashi, Urano or Akiyama with the semiconductor resist forming device of Shigemitsu, is not obvious.

For at least the above reasons, claim 1 and its dependent claims should be deemed allowable. To the extent claims 11 and 17 recite similar elements, claims 11 and 17 and their dependent claims should be deemed allowable for similar reasons.

III. New Claim

Applicant has added claim 21 to provide a more varied scope of protection. Claim 21 should be deemed allowable by virtue of its dependency to claim 1 for the reasons set forth above.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
Appln. No.: 10/804,041

Attorney Docket No.: Q80476

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



Ruthleen E. Uy
Registration No. 51,361

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

23373

CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: December 29, 2005